CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Madison County/City of Sheridan Road Easement & Buffer Zone
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2013
Proponent:	Madison County & City of Sheridan
Location:	Section 6, Township 4 South – Range 5 West
County:	Madison County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proponents, Madison County and City of Sheridan have submitted two easement applications related to the new updated Sewage/ Water treatment facility that was installed in the town of Sheridan in 2012. Because the system was updated and improved, additional treated water (effluent) became available for use by Bradley Livestock for their hay field in section 7, T4S – R5W. Bradley's increased the size of their pivot sprinkler system, and the number of acres that the pivot irrigated.

Because of the expansion of the hay field the irrigation system is in non-compliance of Montana DEQ2 standards for irrigation systems. The DEQ2 standards require that a 200 foot buffer zone be present around an established effluent irrigation system, and a fence be constructed to keep people and livestock out of this buffer zone.

Madison County has applied for an amended County road easement from DNRC to move the Dry Georgia Gulch County Road in Section 6, T4S – R5W which is state land, out of the 200 foot buffer zone. This would require the DNRC to grant Madison County an amended easement which would increase the amount of state land in the easement by 0.169 acres. This would move the road out of the required 200 foot buffer zone.

In addition to the Madison County request, the town of Sheridan has submitted an easement application for an exclusion area in Section 6, T4S – R5W of approximately 3.834 acres as a buffer zone to meet the DEQ requirements outlined in Section 121.5 DEQ2 standards for Irrigation and Rapid Infiltration Systems.

The easement for the city would include construction of a fence to exclude grazing and any other use during periods when the pivot is spraying effluent, which would be in the spring, summer and early fall. The buffer zone would not be irrigated, and no hay would be produced within this zone. Gates in the fence could be made to allow grazing of livestock during periods when the effluent is not being sprayed. The buffer zone could also be excluded from the current lease and the AUM's, and acres present within the zone be removed from lease # 5969 which is currently leased by SRI River Holdings in Twin Bridges.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:
Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

MT Fish Wildlife & Parks
Craig Fager, Wildlife Biologist
730 North Montana
Dillon, MT 59725

Ed & Katherine Guinnane
PO Box 57
Alder, MT 59710

SRI River Holdings
PO Box 447
Twin Bridges, MT59754

MT DNRC Archeologist, Patrick Rennie

Bradley Livestock
PO Box 295
Twin Bridges, MT 59754

Madison County Commissioners
PO Box 278
Virginia City, MT 59755
Patrick Rennie, MT DNRC Archeologist
Natural Resource Information System

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

MT DEQ, Irrigation and Rapid Infiltration Systems

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action Alternative: Grant the town of Sheridan an easement for an exclusion buffer zone to meet DEQ requirements for Irrigation and Rapid Infiltration System requirements for their Sewage/Waste Water treatment facility and grant an amendment to Madison County's historical road easement to move the Dry Georgia Gulch road out of the same 200 foot buffer zone.

No Action Alternative: Deny the town of Sheridan an easement for an exclusion buffer zone to meet DEQ requirements for Irrigation and Rapid Infiltration System requirements for their Sewage/Waste Water treatment facility and deny an amendment to Madison County's historical road easement to move the Dry Georgia Gulch road out of the same 200 foot buffer zone.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:
Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

The NRCS soil survey describes the soils as being Musselshell loam with the parent material being made up of coarse–loamy alluvium derived from limestone. The soils land capability rating is 4e and is a soil of statewide importance for farmland. The NRCS soil survey rates the soils as being "good" for road material. The proposal calls for moving the existing Dry Georgia Gulch County road and ripping and reseeding the existing County road to grass. According to the soil survey both the road construction work and growing of new grass are well suited for these soils. The area in this proposal is flat ground with no unusual geologic features involved. No long term or cumulative effects are anticipated from the implementation of either alternative.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

There are no water bodies that will be affected by the proposal. The area is flat and ground water is not present near the proposal. The proposals will not have any effects on water quality, quantity or distribution. No long term or cumulative effects are anticipated from either alternative.

6. AIR QUALITY:
What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

No air quality problems are anticipated from the action alternative if implemented. Moving the road will cause some dust and particulate to be created during the construction phase of moving the road however the area is in an isolated location away from populated areas and has good air dispersion. No long term or cumulative effects are anticipated to air quality standards if the action alternative is chosen.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:
What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The area where the road is moved would have major disturbance to the vegetation that is present. The area where the current road is located would be ripped with ripper and then would be seeded with a mixture of native grasses. The area where the fence was constructed would also have disturbance and would also be broadcast seeded with a mixture of native grasses.

An NRIS search of the area didn't reveal the presence of any rare plants or plant communities where the project would take place. Because of the small foot print of the proposal and the mitigation of re seeding the disturbed areas no long term or cumulative effects are anticipated from this proposal.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:
Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

A variety of big game, small mammals, raptors, songbirds, and grouse may use this area. Moving the road and building a fence will not have any long term or cumulative effects on wildlife, birds or fish. Due to the relatively small disturbance area and brief installation period, minimal impacts are anticipated.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:
Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

An NRIS search of the project area didn't identify any threatened or endangered species or habitat. There weren't any sensitive species or species of special concern identified with in the project area. No long term or cumulative effects to threatened or endangered species, habitats, or sensitive species or species of special concern are anticipated from these proposals.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

MT DNRC Archeologist Patrick Rennie was consulted and saw no cultural resource concerns associated with this proposal.

11. AESTHETICS:
Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The action alternative would only slightly alter the existing conditions of the area by moving the road over and installing a new fence. The area is away from any population centers and there aren't any houses located near the proposal. No long term or cumulative effects are anticipated to aesthetics from this proposal.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:
Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

Once the fence was built and road moved no other demands on the environmental resources of land, water, air or energy will be required. There will be no cumulative effects to environmental resources from this proposal.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:
List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

The Montana DNRC Dillon Unit is currently considering a proposal from North Western Energy for a proposed Communication Tower in Section 4, T 4S – R 5W. The communication Tower project is currently in the scoping discovery phase to gauge public sentiment for the proposal. The NWE proposal and decision should not have any cumulative impacts to the Dry Georgia Gulch area or effect the moving of the County Road or fence construction associated with this proposal from Madison County and the town of Sheridan.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

This proposal was submitted to the DNRC to meet the current Montana DEQ2 requirements for Irrigation and Rapid Infiltration Systems as set forth by the DEQ. Any Waste water treatment system that sprays effluent for crops needs to meet certain requirements, one of them being having a 200 foot buffer zone away from the spray zone. The current system in place for the town of Sheridan does not meet the requirements. Sheridan's updated system was expanded and a greater quantity of effluent was available for spraying on crop land and the pivot irrigation system was expanded. The expansion caused the county road to be located within the 200 foot buffer zone. For health reason the road will need to be moved out of the buffer zone and a new fence will need to be constructed. In order to meet the health concerns identified by the DEQ and use the existing new system the action alternative would need to be chosen or if the no action alternative is chosen the applicants would have to move the hay field or get a smaller pivot.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Choosing the action alternative should increase the amount of hay that is grown on deeded property but would reduce the amount of grazing on state land by approximately 2 acres for the current lessee SRI River Holdings.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:
Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The proposal will have no long term impacts on quantity and distribution of employment in the Sheridan area.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:
Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

The proposal will have no effects on local or state tax rates.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:
Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.

If implemented, the proposal will not increase the demand for government services or alter traffic patterns.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:
List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There aren't any zoning or building requirements that would be effected if the proposal was implemented.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:
Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

Neither alternative would affect recreational values in the Dry Georgia Gulch area of Madison County.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:
Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

The proposal would have no effect on density and distribution of population and housing in the Sheridan area.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

The proposal would not affect social structures and mores or disrupt traditional lifestyles or the communities of Sheridan or Twin Bridges.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposal will not affect the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the area.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

If the action alternative is chosen the amended right – of - way easement for Madison County would generate $169.00. The easement to the City of Sheridan for the exclusion buffer zone would generate $3,834.00 for the Common School Trust. The acres and AUM will reduce revenue from the lease on a permanent basis.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Tim Egan	**Date:**
	Title:	Dillon Unit Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action Alternative: Grant the town of Sheridan an easement for an exclusion buffer zone to meet DEQ requirements for Irrigation and Rapid Infiltration System requirements for their Sewage/Waste Water treatment facility and grant an amendment to Madison County's historical road easement to move the Dry Georgia Gulch road out of the same 200 foot buffer zone.

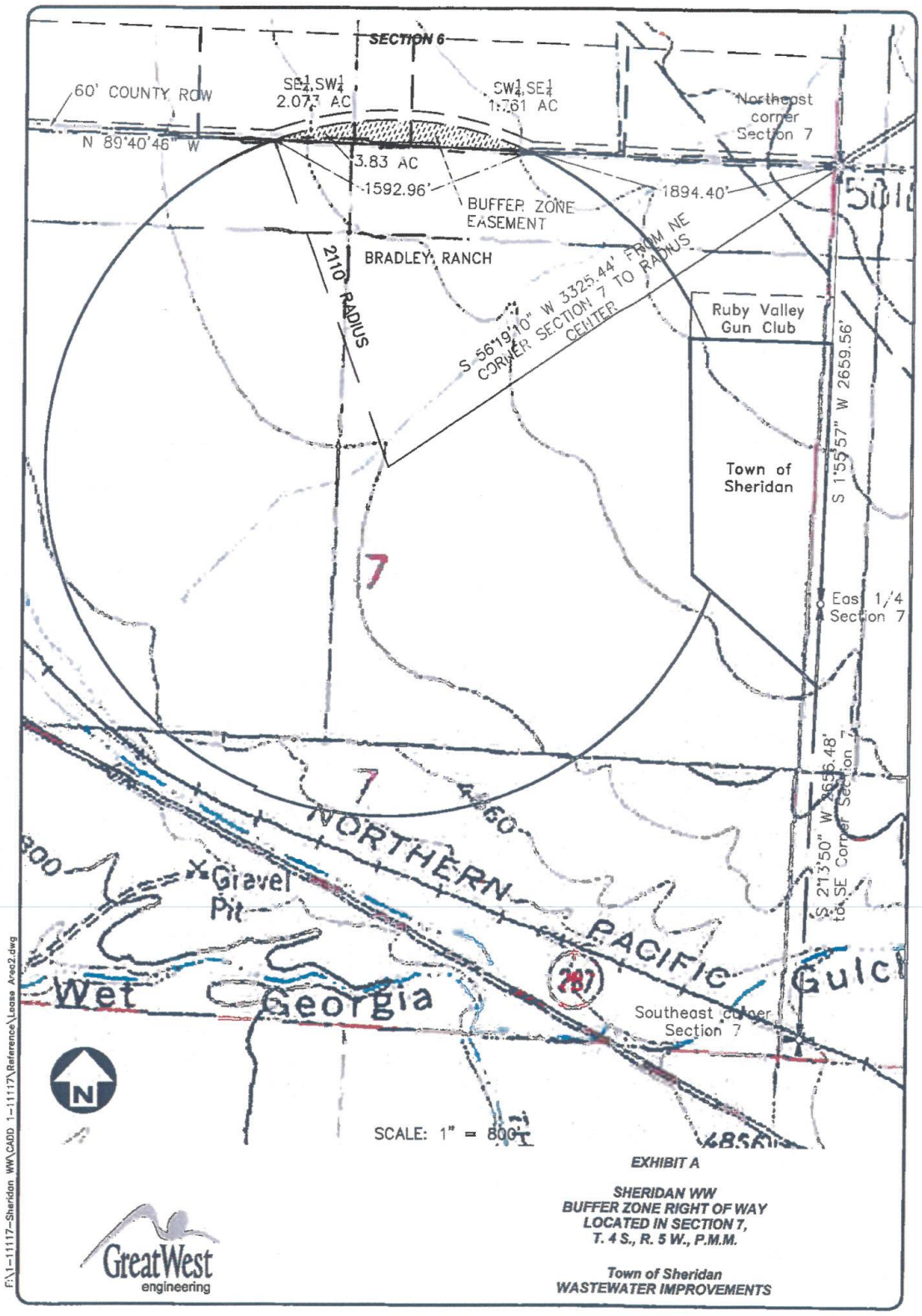
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The additional sewage/waste disposal is for the greatest good of the public. The Trust will benefit, and the impacts are minimal.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

[ ]	EIS	[ ]	More Detailed EA	[X]	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	R. Hoyt Richards	
	Title:	CLO Area Manager	
Signature: /s/		**Date**:	6/6/2013


SECTION 6
60' COUNTY ROW
N 89°40'46" W
SE¼SW¼
2.07 AC
SW¼SE¼
1.61 AC
3.83 AC
1592.96'
1894.40'
Northeast corner Section 7
BUFFER ZONE EASEMENT
BRADLEY RANCH
2110' RADIUS
S 56°19'10" W 3325.44' FROM NE CORNER SECTION 7 TO RADIUS CENTER
Ruby Valley Gun Club
Town of Sheridan
S 1°55'57" W 2659.56'
East 1/4 Section 7
S 2°13'50" W 2656.48' to SE Corner Section 7
7
NORTHERN PACIFIC
Gravel Pit
Wet Georgia
Southeast corner Section 7
SCALE: 1" = 800'
EXHIBIT A
SHERIDAN WW
BUFFER ZONE RIGHT OF WAY
LOCATED IN SECTION 7,
T. 4 S., R. 5 W., P.M.M.
Town of Sheridan
WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENTS
GreatWest engineering
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SCALE: 1" = 800'
F:\1-11117-Sheridan WW\CADD 1-11117\Reference\Lease Area.dwg
GreatWest engineering
EXHIBIT B
SHERIDAN WW
BUFFER ZONE RIGHT OF WAY
LOCATED IN SECTION 7,
T. 4 S., R. 5 W., P.M.M.
Town of Sheridan
WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENTS